

Although these thoughts, feelings and reactions can be very upsetting, it helps to understand that it is normal to have strong reactions to a disaster or traumatic event many months later. Recovery takes time and requires rebuilding on many levels – physically, emotionally and spiritually. However, with patience, understanding and support from family members and friends, you can emerge from a disaster or traumatic event stronger than before.

If you are still having trouble coping, ask for help. Consult a counselor or mental health professional. In the workplace, you may be able to get assistance from your human resources department or your company's Employee Assistance Program.

SOME OF THE RECOVERY PARTNERS

Salvation Army - *Dave Sherman*
(928) 532-4673

Head Volunteer Coordinator - *Eva Packer*
(928) 532-5389

United Way - *Laura Higgins*
(928) 537-3401

Trees for the Rim - *Jan Mathis*
(928) 537-3072

Catholic Charities - *Nelson French*
(928) 334-2244

Rodeo Fire Recovery Team - *Maxine Heimerl*
(928) 587-2230

C.A.N. - *Wes Vosbergh*
(928) 535-6700

Community Counseling Centers, Inc.

Corporate Offices

105 North 5th Avenue
Holbrook, AZ 86025
(928) 524-6126

Holbrook

Outpatient
(928) 524-6126

Show Low

2500 Show Low Lake Road
Show Low, AZ 85901
(928) 537-2951

Winslow

211 E. Third Street
Winslow, AZ 86047
(928) 289-4658

For all those impacted by the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, the White Mountain Recovery Partnership supports recovery, resiliency and renewal. Our role is to identify and assess mental health needs, and to provide empowering individual services and community development programs for the affected areas. WMRP staff are available to individuals, families, community groups, businesses and service organizations *at no charge* for the purpose of realizing wholeness and making peace with the devastation of June 2002.

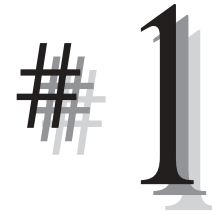
White Mountain Recovery Partnership
P.O. Box 3915, Show Low, AZ 85902
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WHITE MOUNTAIN RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP

Anniversary Reactions

to a
Traumatic Event

The
Recovery Process Continues



The Rodeo-Chediski Fire was a challenge for many residents in the region. The anniversary is a time when reaching out and supporting each other makes a difference.

Feel free to feel better

**In June & July, 2003,
reactions from the 2002
fire may resurface.**

As the first anniversary of the Rodeo-Chediski Fire approaches, many survivors may report a return of restlessness and fear. Psychological literature calls this the "anniversary reaction" and defines it as an individual's response to unresolved grief resulting from significant losses. The anniversary reaction can involve days, weeks or even months of anxiety, anger, nightmares, flashbacks, depression, or fear.

On a more positive note, the anniversary of a disaster or traumatic event can also provide an opportunity for emotional healing. Individuals can make significant progress in working through the recovery process by recognizing, acknowledging, and paying attention to the feelings and issues that surface during the anniversary of a traumatic event. These feelings and issues can help individuals develop a perspective of the event and figure out where it fits in their hearts, minds, and lives.

It is important to note that not all survivors of a disaster or traumatic event experience an anniversary reaction. Those who do, however, may be troubled because they do not expect -- and do not understand -- their reaction. For these individuals, knowing what to expect *in advance* may be helpful.

Common anniversary reactions among survivors of a disaster or traumatic event may include:

Memories, Dreams, Thoughts, and Feelings

Individuals may replay memories, thoughts, and feelings about the event which they can't turn off. They may relive the event through images and scenes associated with the trauma

over and over again. They may have recurring dreams or nightmares. These reactions may be as vivid on the anniversary as they were at the actual time of the disaster itself.

Grief and Sadness

Individuals may experience grief and sadness related to the loss of income, employment, a home or a loved one. Even people who have moved to new homes often feel a sense of loss on the anniversary. Those who were forced to relocate to another community may experience intense homesickness for their old neighborhoods.

Fear and Anxiety

Fear and anxiety may resurface around the time of the Rodeo-Chediski Fire anniversary, leading to jumpiness, startle responses, and vigilance about safety. These feelings may be particularly strong for individuals who are still working through the grieving process.

Frustration, Anger, and Guilt

The anniversary may reawaken frustration and anger about the disaster or traumatic event. Survivors may be reminded of the possessions, homes, or pets and animals they lost; the time taken away from their lives; the frustrations with bureaucratic aspects of the recovery process; and the slow process of rebuilding and healing. Individuals may also experience guilt about their losses, compared with those of their neighbors. These feelings may be particularly strong for individuals who are not fully recovered financially and emotionally.

Avoidance

Some survivors try to protect themselves from experiencing an anniversary reaction by avoiding reminders of the event and attempting to treat the anniversary as just an ordinary day. Even for those people, it can be helpful to learn about common reactions that they or their loved ones may encounter, so they are not surprised if reactions occur.

Remembrance

Many survivors welcome the cleansing tears, commemorations, and fellowship that the anniversary of the event offers. They see it as a time to honor the memory of what they have lost. They might light a candle, share favorite memories and stories, or attend a worship service.

Reflection

The reflection brought about by the anniversary of a disaster or traumatic event is often a turning point in the recovery process. It is an opportunity for people to look back over the past year, recognize how far they have come, and give themselves credit for the challenges they conquered. It is a time for survivors to look inward and to recognize and appreciate the courage, stamina, endurance, and resourcefulness that they and their loved ones showed during the recovery process. It is a time for people to look around and pause to appreciate the family members, friends, and others who supported them through the healing process. It is also a time when most people can look forward with a renewed sense of hope and purpose.